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SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S CALL ON MINISTER FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

SUMMARY

11. (SBU) IN HIS COURTESY CALL ON MINISTER FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY STANCA, THE AMBASSADOR EXPLORED ITALIAN HIGH-TECH, PROMOTED THE JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER AS HONING THE ITALIAN EDGE IN DESIGN AND ENGINEERING, AND SOUGHT AN ALLY IN THE BIOTECH DEBATES. MINISTER STANCA, CAUTIOUS IN HIS NEWLY ESTABLISHED MINISTRY, EMPHASIZED E-GOVERNMENT, ASSISTANCE TO UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, AND ONLINE EDUCATION AND MEDICAL SUPPORT. STANCA IS HOSTING A G8-INSPIRED CONFERENCE ON THE DIGITAL DIVIDE IN PALERMO IN APRIL WHERE HE WOULD LIKE TO PRESENT THE RESULTS OF HIS VISITS TO ALBANIA, TUNISIA AND JORDAN. BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED BY THE THREE GOVERNMENTS, ITALY WILL HELP ALBANIA DIGITIZE ITS NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, ASSIST TUNISIA WITH LAND REGISTRY AND SHOW JORDAN HOW TO IMPLEMENT AN ONLINE TAX PROGRAM SO THAT CITIZENS CAN PAY THEIR TAXES ONLINE. A PROGRAM HAS NOT YET BEEN IDENTIFIED FOR MOZAMBIQUE. STANCA WOULD LIKE TO COME TO WASHINGTON TO DISCUSS BEST PRACTICES IN E-GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

NEW MINISTRY

12. (SBU) THE AMBASSADOR CALLED ON LUCIO STANCA, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO FOR INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 30. ALSO PRESENT WERE DCM POPE, ECMIN DEAN AND STANCA'S DIPLOMATIC ADVISOR, STEFANO GATTI. THE MINISTRY IS NEW WITH THE BERLUSCONI ADMINISTRATION, EXPANDING AND EMPHASIZING A PORTFOLIO HELD IN PREVIOUS GOVERNMENTS BY AN UNDER-SECRETARY OR ADVISOR IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE. SPECIFICALLY THE MINISTRY HAS BEEN GIVEN THE MANDATE TO IMPROVE INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR. GIVEN THAT HIS OBJECTIVE IS TO COMPUTERIZE ALL GOVERNMENT SERVICES, STANCA WANTS TO CREATE ONLINE PORTALS FOR ALL GOVERNMENT SERVICES OFFERED BY NATIONAL, REGIONAL, AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES. IN THIS CAPACITY, STANCA RAISED THE POSSIBILITY OF VISITING THE U.S. IN THE LATE SPRING OR EARLY FALL TO LOOK AT OUR E-GOVERNMENT PROCESS AND ORGANIZATION. HE FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT "IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, HE WOULD LIKE TO EXPLORE BEST (E-GOVERNMENT) PRACTICES", PARTICULARLY IN THE FIELDS OF EDUCATION AND HEALTH. (COMMENT: WE LOOK AT THIS MINISTRY AS HAVING A POSITIVE POTENTIAL TO ADVANCE TECH ISSUES WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND WITHIN ITALY. WHAT HAPPENS TO THIS UNDER-FUNDED AND UNDERSTAFFED MINISTRY REMAINS TO BE SEEN.)

13. (SBU) IN THIS POSITIVE SPIRIT OF POSSIBLY FINDING A NEW ALLY IN THE TECHNOLOGY FIELD, THE AMBASSADOR RAISED A BROAD RANGE OF TECHNOLOGY ISSUES: FROM BIOTECHNOLOGY AND THE NEED FOR SCIENTISTS TO DO BASIC RESEARCH, SUCH AS CONDUCT FIELD TRIALS (WHICH ARE NOW PROHIBITED) TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF MAINTAINING THE HIGH-TECH SKILLS OF ITALIAN SCIENTISTS AND ENGINEERS IN DESIGNING AND PRODUCING COMPONENTS OF THE JOINT STRIKE FIGHTER TO PARTICIPATION IN THE CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONFERENCE THE POST IS HOSTING IN APRIL. WHILE STANCA, A 36-YEAR EMPLOYEE OF IBM, WAS CAUTIOUS ABOUT TREADING ON THE TURF OF HIS FELLOW MINISTERS, HE CLEARLY UNDERSTOOD THE DISADVANTAGES OF ITALY'S BEING LEFT BEHIND IN THE TECHNOLOGY RACE. HE THOUGHT THAT MINISTER MORATTI, MINISTER OF CULTURE AND RESEARCH, WOULD BE A NATURAL ALLY ON RESTARTING BIOTECH RESEARCH. HE WAS ALSO ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT DISTANCE BIO-MEDICAL SUPPORT, WHICH WOULD BE ANOTHER WAY FOR ITALY TO HELP UNDER-DEVELOPED COUNTRIES. STANCA IS EVIDENTLY NEW TO THE GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY, BUT PREPARED TO MOVE CAUTIOUSLY IN HIS AREA. AS VICE-CHAIR OF THE ASPEN INSTITUTE, HE THOUGHT THAT THE INSTITUTE COULD BE A FORUM TO EXPLORE BIOTECH DISCUSSIONS.

DIGITAL DIVIDE

14. (SBU) STANCA ALSO RAISED THE DIGITAL DIVIDE AS AN AREA WHERE ITALY COULD DO MORE TO HELP UNDERDEVELOPED COUNTRIES. (COMMENT: THE GOI HEADS THE G8 DOT FORCE ON THE DIGITAL DIVIDE. AT BOTH THE 1999 OKINAWA AND 2001 GENOA SUMMIT, THE G8 LEADERS CONFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO BRIDGING THIS DIGITAL DIVIDE. THE GOI IS WORKING TO PUT INTO OPERATION A PLAN OF ACTION. END COMMENT.) HE STRESSED THAT ITALY GIVES ONLY 0.13 PERCENT OF ITS GDP IN FINANCIAL AID AND THAT THIS WAS WELL BELOW THE EU TARGET. STANCA SAID THAT HE AND ITALY WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT ITALIAN RESOURCES ARE WELL SPENT; IT

WOULD INCREASE THEIR CREDIBILITY IF THE GOI CAN IMPROVE
FOREIGN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATIONS.

15. (SBU) THE GOI WILL HOST A CONFERENCE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH
THE UN, NGOS AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, ON THE
DIGITAL DIVIDE IN EARLY APRIL. STANCA PLANS TO HIGHLIGHT A
PILOT PROGRAM AMONG THE GOI AND FOUR COUNTRIES, ALBANIA,
TUNISIA, JORDAN, AND MOZAMBIQUE. STANCA HAD JUST RETURNED
FROM VISITING THE FIRST THREE. AFTER DISCUSSIONS WITH EACH
GOVERNMENT, WHICH INCLUDED PRESENTING A MENU OF THE SPECIFIC
TYPES OF ASSISTANCE ITALY COULD PROVIDE, STANCA HAD THEM
IDENTIFY THEIR TOP PRIORITY FOR E-GOVERNMENT. SPECIFICALLY
ITALY WILL HELP ALBANIA DIGITIZE ITS NATIONAL ACCOUNTS, WHICH
ARE STILL BEING KEPT BY HAND. THE GOI WILL ASSIST TUNISIA
WITH ITS LAND REGISTRY PROGRAM. (COMMENT: WE BELIEVE THIS
WILL PROVIDE STABILITY AND CONFIDENCE, ALLOW LEGAL SALES AND
TRANSFERS, AND PERMIT OWNERS TO DRAW ON THE CAPITAL IN THEIR
LAND THROUGH MORTGAGE BORROWING TO HELP CAPITALIZE OTHER
INVESTMENT. END COMMENT.) AND ITALY WILL HELP JORDAN WITH
AN ONLINE TAX PROGRAM SO THAT PRIVATE AND CORPORATE CITIZENS
CAN PAY ALL THEIR TAXES ONLINE. STANCA REPORTED THAT THE EU
HAD RECOGNIZED ITALY'S PAPERLESS TAXPAYER SYSTEM WITH AN
AWARD FOR BEST PROGRAM. WITH MOZAMBIQUE, ITALY IS WORKING ON
IDENTIFYING PRACTICAL NEEDS THAT THE NEW INNOVATION MINISTRY
CAN TAKE ON.

BIO

16. (U) BORN IN LUCERA ON OCTOBER 20, 1941, STANCA HAS A
DEGREE IN ECONOMICS FROM MILAN'S BOCCONI UNIVERSITY. HE
BEGAN HIS CAREER IN COMPUTER INFORMATION, JOINING IBM AS A
SALES TECHNICIAN IN 1968. HE RETIRED FROM HIS POSITION AS
CEO, IBM (EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA) IN 2001. STANCA IS
ALSO VICE CHAIR OF THE ASPEN INSTITUTE, ITALY, AND ON THE
COUNCIL FOR THE U.S. AND ITALY. HE SPEAKS EXCELLENT ENGLISH
AND IS MARRIED TO FRANCESCA CANEPA.
SEMBLER

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